

MYTHS AND REALITIES OF PERENNIAL GARDENING

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Perennial Favorites
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My Picks for an All-Star Line-Up

A. In the sun (minimum 6 hours of direct sun each day)

1. Windflower, pasque flower, prairie crocus
(*Anemone pulsatilla*, AKA *Pulsatilla vulgaris*):
early, good in seed & leaf; long-lived; moist well-drained soil
2. cushion spurge (*Euphorbia polychroma*, AKA *E. epithymoides*):
early; bright; good in seed & leaf; long-lived; well-drained soil
3. Variegated iris (*Iris pallida* 'Argenteo-variegata'):
striking leaf and form; pest resistant; moist well-drained soil
4. Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*):
evergreen; fragrant; good form if sheared 2X annually, spring & mid-summer
5. Husker Red beardtongue (*Penstemon* x 'Husker Red'):
evergreen; good leaf, flower and seed; height without staking; long-lived
6. Artemisia spp, esp. clump forming
(*Artemisia schmidtiana*, A. 'Silver Brocade', A. 'Silver King'):
some evergreen; striking foliage color; clump forming types have best form if
sheared 2X annually, spring & mid-summer
7. Silver grass, maiden grass, Chinese silver grass (*Miscanthus* spp.):
late effect and winter interest; height without staking; patterned foliage;
clump, long-lived
8. Perennial fountain grass (*Pennisetum alopecuroides* and varieties):
late effect; movement; clump, long-lived; cover for bulbs
9. Threadleaf coreopsis (*Coreopsis verticillata*, esp. 'Moonbeam'):
long bloom, good foliage, long-lived
10. Blanket flower, Indian blanket (*Gaillardia* varieties & hybrids):
bright color, big flower; long bloom; performs well in exposed locations;
must have well-drained soil without too much clay
11. Purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*):
long bloom; height without staking; shade tolerance; wildlife
12. Black-eye Susan, perennial types (esp. *Rudbeckia* 'Goldsturm'):
long bloom; big, bright flower; aggressive clump-former
13. Showy stonecrop, tall sedum, live-forever
(*Sedum spectabile*, esp. 'Autumn Joy'):
late effect; good winter form; clump, long-lived
14. Plume poppy (*Macleaya cordata*):
good bloom and seed head; bold foliage; movement; height without staking;
aggressive spreader but controllable
15. Daylily (*Hemerocallis* varieties, esp. repeat-blooming):
big, bold flower; performs well in wide range of sites;
aggressive clump-forming; long-lived

B. In the part shade (4-6 hours sun per day) and shade (2-4 hours sun per day)

1. lungwort, Bethlehem sage, pulmonaria

- (*Pulmonaria saccharata*, *P. angustifolia*, *P. rubra*):
early bloom; good foliage and form; performs well in wide variety of sites
2. Bergenia, heartleaf bergenia, pigsqueak (*Bergenia cordifolia*):
bold foliage; evergreen; good in mass; aggressive if in lean soil
 3. Ginger (*Asarum* spp. and varieties):
good foliage; some evergreen; good in dense shade
 4. Lady's mantle (*Alchemilla* spp. and varieties):
good bloom and seed; strong form and foliage; aggressive clump-former;
long-lived; tolerates sun; performs well in tough sites
 5. Perennial geranium, cranesbill (*Geranium* spp. and varieties):
good flower; good form and foliage; wide variety of heights, flower;
aggressive clump-formers; perform well in heat; tolerate shade and sun,
(prefer half-shade)
 6. Coral bells (*Heuchera* spp. and varieties):
long bloom (*H. sanguineum* and *Heucherella* varieties); evergreen foliage;
wide variety (check Tiarella, also - wide variety coming, same form, more
shade tolerant)
 7. Masterwort (*Astrantia* species and varieties):
long bloom; good seed structure; long-lived; sun tolerant
 8. Astilbe, false spirea (*Astilbe* spp. and varieties):
bold flower; mid-season and late (needed in shade); good foliage;
long-lived; moist to wet
 9. Fairy candle, bug bane, snakeroot (*Cimicifuga* spp.):
height without staking; late summer and fall bloom; good foliage (some
varieties excellent); aggressive clump-formers (one spreader)
 10. Turtlehead (*Chelone obliqua*):
late bloom, long bloom; height without staking; wildlife; moist
 11. Hosta (*Hosta* spp. and varieties):
good foliage form, size, variety; some late, fragrant; good in dense shade;
some sun-tolerant; aggressive clump-formers; long-lived
 12. Japanese anemone (*Anemone japonica*, *A. x hybrida*, *A. hupehensis*):
late bloom; movement; aggressive spreader but controllable; long-lived;
cover for bulbs

Recommended Reading

- Caring for Perennials, Janet Macunovich, 1997, Garden Way Publishing
(available here, at local bookstores or from publisher at 1-800-827-8673)
- Easy Garden Design, Janet Macunovich, 1992, Garden Way Publishing
(available here, at local bookstores or from publisher at 1-800-827-8673)
- Growing Concerns 1994, Growing Concerns 1995, Growing Concerns 1996,
Growing Concerns 1997, Growing Concerns 1998, Janet Macunovich's
annual editions of practical answers to real garden problems (available by
mail; send \$23.00 per book - includes tax - plus \$5 per order for shipping to
Perennial Favorites, 120 Lorberta, Waterford, MI 48328)
- Herbaceous Perennial Plants: Treatise on Their Identification, Culture, and Garden
Attributes, Allan Armitage, 2nd ed. 1997, Stipes Publishing
- (Manual of) Herbaceous Ornamental Plants, Steven Still, 1988, Stipes Publishing
- Taylor's Guides to: Perennials / Groundcovers / Vines and Grasses
- Perennials for American Gardens, R. R. Clausen and N. H. Eckstrom, 1989,
Random House
- Designing with Perennials, Pamela J. Harper, 1991, Macmillan Publishing